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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 August 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Right to Development and the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII welcomes the Consolidated report of the Secretary General and High Commissioner for Human Rights, delivered at the 30th regular session of the Human Rights Council.

In particular, we welcome the work of OHCHR to integrate all human rights, including the right to development, into the post 2015 sustainable development agenda as well as into the two other main international development processes of 2015, namely the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in July in Addis Ababa and the United Nations Climate Change Conference, to be held in Paris in December.

The process of setting the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda will reach its conclusion at the end of September 2015 when the UN member States will gather in New York to adopt in the GA Summit the new agenda with a solemn declaration. The finalised text for adoption published on the 1st of August and entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" is the result of over two years of intensive public consultation and engagement with civil society and other stakeholders around the world. Such a document, if adopted, appears truly to set an agenda of unprecedented scope and significance that "is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law and is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. It is also informed by other instruments such as the Declaration on the Right to Development[1]".

In 2016, the international community will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Right to Development, a declaration that lags very much behind in its implementation!

It will be a great sign given to the world to adopt a sustainable development agenda that is animated by the vision of Right to Development and can create an opportunity to evaluate the progress made to date in its realization. In fact, the Right to Development provides an integrated, holistic and cohesive normative framework for achieving just and equitable development for all people. It encompasses both the civil and political and the economic, social and cultural dimensions of human rights and addresses both the national and international dimensions of development.

Indeed, if the Post-2015 agenda were not set on the vision of the right to development, it will be a great loss for all people struggling for development.

APG23 hopes that the Member States of the United Nations will adopt - and take forward with determination the outcome document at the forthcoming Summit in New York.

As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki- Moon strongly stated in his Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Agenda,[2] "The defining challenge of our time is to close the gap between our determination to ensure a life of dignity for all on the one hand, and the reality of persisting poverty and deepening inequality on the other".

We believe that closing that gap, can be achieved only if the Post-2015 Agenda is inextricably linked to the proposed Sustainable Development Goal 17: "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development"[3].

Most importantly, a renewed global partnership for sustainable development can only be effective by putting the human being at its centre and taking into account the well-being of the person, and of all people, in different life situations: economic, social, political, cultural, ecological and spiritual. This is the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on the

[1] Transforming our world: the 20130 Agenda for Sustainable Development Finalised text for adoption (1 August)
[2] The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet – Synthesis Report of the Secretary General on the Post-2015 Agenda, New York, December 2014, paragraph 67.
[3] Transforming our world: the 20130 Agenda for Sustainable Development Finalised text for adoption (1 August)

Right to Development, which in Article 2 identifies the human person as the "central subject of development". It is also the vision of the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church that promotes integral human development.

The Right to Development and International Solidarity must be the basis of all coherent action needed to address root causes of rising global inequality and injustice. "A firm and persevering determination to commit [ourselves] to the common good, to the good of all and each individual"[4] is very much needed.

We are currently witnessing a movement of refugees and other forced migrants of historic proportion. In fact, "boat people" and so many of those migrating for economic reasons are persons who, risking their life, are desperately exercising their individual right to development in the only "practical " way available to them. Yet, the international community and the majority of countries of transit and destination fail to recognise this sufficiently and instead focus first, predominantly and so expensively in protecting their borders.

Rampant poverty, mass unemployment, growing inequality within and between countries, environmental degradation, an out-of-date international economic order, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, armed conflicts, increased violent extremism and terrorism are all signs of the failure of the international community to advance peace and security, human rights and development, which all come together in the right to development. Indeed, for millions of people around the world, the right to development remains most and around a mere political commitment, and a distant hope.

Thus, we call upon the Members States to assure that the proposed Sustainable Development Goal 17 will be included in the final Post-2015 Agenda, and that the renewed global partnership for sustainable development will be inspired by the Right to Development as well as the concepts of Integral Human Development and International Solidarity.

Finally, we call upon the Members of the Open Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Right to Development to end playing the political power game and overcome the inhibiting polarization of the debate on Right to Development that places the developed countries and the developing world on opposing sides. Given the importance of the implementation of the Right to Development to all peoples and countries in the word, the Working Group should focus on the search of what is the common good for all humanity and speed up the process of refining the criteria and operational sub-criteria for the implementation of right to development.

As the former High Commissioner for Human Rights rightly said on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Declaration on Right to Development,[5] "In an increasingly interdependent world, we need responsible diplomacy and principled global governance based on shared duties and the mutual accountability of both developed and developing countries in a spirit of international cooperation, partnership and solidarity. We have a solemn responsibility to make the right to development a reality for everyone, everywhere, so that all can enjoy freedom from want and freedom from fear".

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[4] Saint John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, paragraph 38.

[5] 25 years of the right to development - Achievements and Challenges: Statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Navathan Pillay, Berlin, 24 February 2011